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ABSTRACT

This paper highlights some implications of living in an Information Age and discusses ways in which information is changing the economics of our society, as well as how the economics of information are also changing. The driving force behind the Information Age--technology--is presented in terms of its impact on information access. Noting that two areas threaten the public's right of access to information--electronic information's transitory quality, and the existence of several policy issues that limit access to governmental information--the paper argues that the dissemination role of libraries, publishers, and the information industry over the next decade will be a determining factor in the public's access to government information. The issue of how technology is changing the nature of private copyright protection is also raised. Six ways in which future Information Age policymakers can address the issues involved in protecting access to information are suggested, and the library community is advised that it must play a key role in shaping these policies if basic democratic freedoms are to be preserved. (MAB)

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White House Conference on Library and Information Services 1991

The Information Age: Promise or Dream

by

Kenneth B. Allen

Paper presented at the Florida Governor's Conference
on Libraries and Information Services
Tallahassee, Florida, December 3, 1990

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"THE INFORMATION AGE: PROMISE OR DREAM"

Presentation of
Kenneth B. Allen

Florida Governor's Conference on Libraries and Information Services

House Chamber, Florida State Capitol
Tallahassee, Florida
December 3, 1990

Introduction

Good afternoon. It is truly an honor for me to be here today as you discuss and debate the challenges and opportunities of the emerging information age. It is appropriate that this conference is taking place in this chamber of representatives: a symbol of our democracy.

Paul Tash has provided a picture of Florida's economy and demographics over the coming decade. I now wish to take you on a journey. During the next few minutes we will travel from Tallahassee to Washington, D.C. and around the world--to London and Moscow. In making this trip I hope to demonstrate how the issues on your agenda are not unique to your community and state. People around the world are striving to achieve what you are here to do: Exercise the right of self-government in a society which guarantees freedom of speech and the free flow of ideas.

My personal journey into the information age began almost twenty years ago. In 1970 the national intercollegiate debate topic dealt with the right to privacy, "Resolved: that greater controls should be placed on the federal government's ability to collect and use information about individuals." As a member of the college debate team, I spent the year arguing the pros and cons of this issue. Debaters also enjoyed a highly coveted perk--a stack pass to the university library. This was the same university attended by Governor Bob Martinez and, as he mentioned a few minutes ago, the library was a tremendous resource. I spent many pleasurable hours surrounded by the history, information and ideas contained on those shelves.

My interest in information policy did not end with graduation. As a clerk-typist with the Department of Defense, my first real job, one of my duties was to operate a punched card accounting machine, otherwise known as a PCAM. For those youngsters in the chamber, a PCAM is a noisy machine--about the size of a roll-top desk--that
punches holes in Hollerith cards. Terminals and software for online access were not yet available and Hollerith cards were needed to communicate with your computer. The best place to see punch cards and PCAMs today is in the Smithsonian Institution.

Since then I have been involved in a variety of information issues, both operational and policy. For example, I once did a study to assess whether the Joint Chiefs of Staff should transfer its paper documents to a new technology that was then emerging--microfilm. While at the U.S. Office of Management and Budget I participated in the development and implementation of new government-wide information policies. Today, many of those same issues--and more--are on the agenda of the Information Industry Association (IIA), a twenty-two year old trade association representing almost 800 companies involved in the collection, distribution and use of information products, services and technologies.

One footnote. Three years after the national debate topic on privacy, Congress enacted the Privacy Act of 1974 to regulate the Federal government's ability to collect and use information about individuals. Upon joining the Office of Management and Budget (OMB) in 1976, one of my responsibil-ities was to administer the Privacy Act throughout the executive branch. Thus, my information policy

experience has come full circle over the years. This is especially true with the reemergence of privacy as a national issue.

One indication that you have been involved in a subject too long is that you think you know more to talk about than you have time allotted. I have therefore confined my remarks to only a few issues: access to information; the impact of rapidly changing technologies; and the role of libraries, publishers and the information industry over the next decade. During the next few minutes I wish to touch briefly on these subjects and one more, library and information services for democracy--one of the three themes adopted by the White House Conference on Library and Information Services.

The Information Age

During the past decade it has become fashionable for pundits and politicians--from Drucker to Gore to Toffler--to say that the United States has entered an Information Age. We have become an Information Society. What does this glib statement really mean? I suspect that each of us has a different conception of the Information Age.

To me, it describes a society which is becoming increasingly more complex and difficult to manage. It is an age in which our economic, political, and social wellbeing is intertwined with, and dependent upon, the welfare of other persons and nations. It is an age in which decisions can have substantial and long-term impacts on our lives. It is also an age in which there is little room for error, and the time available to make major decisions is diminishing. An extreme example of the implications of the Information Age can be found on the evening news, which frequently reminds us that the commanders in Desert Shield may have only seconds in which to make life or death decisions regarding whether to fire on incoming objects. The accidental downing of a passenger jet over the Persian Gulf by an American warship demonstrated the awful tragedy of what can happen when a critical decision is based on misinformation.

The Information Age describes an economy in which services, not agriculture or manufacturing, are recognized as the primary output. Although services have always played an important role in our economy, it is only recently that they have been visible and we have begun to measure their impact. Services are also increasingly based upon the production, dissemination and use of information. Finally, the Information Age is one in which our nation's security will be as much a function of our economic strength as it will our military might.

The rate of change is rapidly escalating. As the decisions become more complex, the greater is our need for better--more accurate and timely--information upon which to make those decisions. This in turn leads to greater investment in the production and use of new information products and services. In the Information Age, information joins capital and labor as one of the basic inputs needed for a productive economic system.

The generation of new information products and services leads, in turn, to the creation of new jobs and lines of business. We are beginning to see the merger of production and process. The traditional factory model of production--with clear lines of demarcation between product, market and customer is disappearing. Organizations are beginning to integrate both internal and external information sources into their day-to-day operation. The line between producer and customer is becoming transparent. In turn, greater value is placed on those professions and products which assist the consumer--whether corporate or individual--in finding, synthesizing and using information. In the Information Age the information function will no longer be passive. Information providers, both public and private, will have to demonstrate that they are a vital resource for day-to-day success.

The benefits of the Information Age are tremendous. Today you can drive through the environs of Washington, D.C. and see thousands of companies and lines of business that weren't even imagined, much less in existence, twenty years ago. It is even more exciting, however, to see the diversity of new and innovative information products and services that are now available.

Just as information is changing the economics of our society, the economics of information are also changing. Although technology is driving down the cost of information products and services, this fact is

obscured because while quality is simultaneously improving exponentially, we are attempting to apply out-of-date industrial measures to service activities. The same methodologies cannot be used to compare a book and an electronic product. The cost of production for a book ends with delivery of the final product to the user, who assumes ongoing responsibility for maintenance and preservation. An online database with the same information, however, requires factors of production not encountered with a book: hardware, software, documentation, communications, upgrades and customer assistance. An online database also requires the provider to assume continuing maintenance costs over the life of the product. In a sense, an online database is never a "final" product. On the other hand, the database replaces far more than just the book: it transforms the function. An online database may seem expensive when compared to a book; however, the value of the database far exceeds that of the book if it permits the user to work more efficiently. Take for example the lawyer who can avoid long hours in the library doing research by spending a few minutes searching a legal database. The Information Age requires new techniques for measuring and assessing the costs and benefits of information products and services.

This is not meant to ignore one of the critical dangers to the Information Age. As the amount of information increases and the cost of that information goes up, we are increasingly aware of those in our society who are being left behind. There are too many citizens, libraries, and businesses who may be denied access to information due to a lack of resources. It would be tragic if the Information Society were to become a Rodeo Drive or Fifth Avenue in which many in our society are left outside, gazing through the display windows at products and services they cannot afford. I will return to this challenge in a moment.

Technology and Change

The driving force behind the Information Age is, of course, technology. From PCAMs to PCs, PacMan to the MacIntosh, microfilm to CD-ROM and coaxial cable to fiber optics, we are seeing the emergence of technologies previously available only to the imagination. Computer and communications technologies have changed the ways in which we collect, disseminate, preserve, and use information. The change continues. Scientists are experimenting with computers based on neuron-nets intended to emulate the human brain. The electronic networks of the future may permit us to generate our own, personalized "knowbots"--computer programs which will run through a network like PacMan--collecting only that information we need.

Even the book has been transformed in ways far beyond anything Gutenberg could have envisioned when he composed his first printed page. Publishers now offer college professors the ability to create unique textbooks tailored to the needs of each class. The book has even gone digital. You can listen to books on tape as you drive to work or read an electronic book while walking down the street. Tomorrow's stack pass will be electronically encoded.

We are in the midst of rapid changes which are transforming our daily lives, our society, and our world. These changes offer the opportunity to strengthen the social, political, and economic fabric of our nation. There is also danger: we may become so enraptured with the technology that we use our nation's scare resources to acquire products and services we don't need. I wonder how many people own the VCR that can be programmed a year in advance. An interesting, but useless, product since most programs are scheduled only a few weeks in advance. More importantly, the changes being wrought by technology are both complex and subtle. We must take care not to sacrifice our basic liberties and values in a hasty scramble for the golden fleece of the Information Age.

In the midst of this rapid change we must be especially diligent. We are like the person standing in the center of a hurricane; a position from which it is almost impossible to determine the size, shape and force of the entire storm. Moreover, the calm of the eye may deceive us into thinking that we are safe from the maelstrom around us. That deception may cause us to make policy decisions which could lead down the wrong path.

It is always difficult to predict the future. Given the rapidity with which change is currently occurring, it may be almost impossible right now. A few years ago many forecasters

promised that the computer age would lead to massive unemployment and the obsolescence of paper. Neither, of course, has happened. Several years ago the IIA commissioned a study which asked several futurists to look ahead to the year 2000. This study, *The Information Millennium*, is only three years old. While it continues to provide some interesting insights, its assumptions proved far too conservative. Technological and political breakthroughs have already exceeded much of what was envisioned in the study.

Access to Information in the Information Age

Let's turn to one of the issues that has emerged, access to information.

During the past two years there has been a debate going on regarding how best to provide access to federal government information.

At the most basic level, the issue is citizen access to information produced by the government in the course of carrying out its statutory responsibilities. Democracy, self-government, is predicated upon a right-to-know. Citizens who are denied access to information about the basic workings of their government are denied the ability to exercise fully their right of self-government.

This is a fairly simple statement, so self-evident that it need not be stated. It is therefore ironic that this fundamental "right of access" cannot be found in the Constitution. Certainly, it is implied. Article I requires Congress to publish a journal and provides for a published budget. An explicit right of access to government information, however, was not established until the 1960s, almost 180 years after the birth of our nation. Passage of the Freedom of Information Act was a major, if somewhat belated, victory. Unfortunately, technology now threatens this right and may make the victory a Pyrrhic one.

Several years ago the government proposed to eliminate the distribution of congressional information on paper to depository libraries and substitute microfilm. This initiative was successfully resisted by librarians and the information industry. They argued that citizens should not have to rely solely on microfilm for access to current documents that are essential for the proper functioning of our system of self government. Microfilm is an extremely valuable medium. However, a product available only on a single technology may deny access to those who do not have the technology to make use of such a product. Just as a person who cannot read is denied access to the information in a book.

Technology is emphasizing the transitory nature of information. Information stored in electronic media may become obscure if an obsolete technology is needed to access it. Or the information can disappear without a trace at the touch of a button. Watergate and the Iran-Contra scandal ultimately turned on the basis of electronic information which was only accidentally saved. With no information to access, the right of self-government would be diminished, if not lost.

There are also policy issues which threaten our right of access. Several federal agencies have asserted that the Freedom of Information Act (FOIA) does not guarantee access to electronic information. Other agencies have sought to amend FOIA.

The Defense Mapping Agency produces charts, maps and other geographic information using sophisticated new technologies. Most of this information is unclassified and much of it is for sale by the agency. Nevertheless, the agency recently proposed to amend the Freedom of Information Act to permit the withholding of some of this information. The agency argued that it could be used by the "wrong persons" for purposes contrary to the national interest and that release of this data may provide intelligence regarding the methods and technologies by which it was collected. The agency chose not to classify the information on the grounds that classification is administratively cumbersome and costly.

More recently the Department of Defense proposed new FOIA regulations which would permit the Department to withhold unclassified information from public release if a reasonable person could compile it with other unclassified information and produce classified information. This "mosaic theory" was the premise behind a 1985 White House proposal to restrict public access to "sensitive but unclassified" information. The White House proposal was ultimately rescinded in response to the tremendous public opposition expressed by industry, public interest

groups and libraries. However, the more recent Department of Defense FOIA regulation went into effect.

While we may disagree with the government's proposed policies, it would be a mistake to deny the legitimacy of these issues. Technology is creating new gray areas in which the old rules may no longer work.

One worrisome alternative is to permit the release of such information but monitor who uses it and for what purposes. In 1986, as the government was announcing the adoption of its "sensitive but unclassified" information policy, agents from the FBI and National Security Agency were visiting information company executives seeking information about the customers of unclassified data. Not long afterwards we learned about the FBI Library Awareness program. Last year we found out that the FBI had opened files on those persons who criticized the idea of agents in the library.

Although I have received no recent reports of visits to information companies, the FBI may still be visiting librarians. Congress left that door open when it bowed to intelligence agency objections and specifically refused to provide library customers with the same privacy protection accorded the renters of video cassettes.

Last month the National Technical Information Service (NTIS) circulated a new contract to private sector purchasers of the NTIS database. If approved, individuals and companies who resell the information (which is neither classified nor copyrighted) would have to provide the names and addresses of their customers to the government. If you access NTIS information through a service such as DIALOG, the government wants to know about it.

These problems will become even more complex in a network environment where information can be transmitted around the world at the push of a button. Will the price of the National Research and Education Network (NREN) be that we must permit the government to monitor our use of information in exchange for the rights to access it? I hope not. Our challenge is to find new and innovative solutions while preserving basic freedoms. The right-to-know must not become a need-to-know in the Information Age.

Government as a Source of Information

The issue of access to government information has another important dimension: that of dissemination. The Federal government, as do all governments, has a critical and legitimate responsibility to provide basic information products and services to our nation. This includes information such as laws, judicial decisions, economic statistics, census data and scientific research. Government also uses information to carry out many of its statutory responsibilities. The premise underlying federal regulation of the financial system is that disclosure of accurate and full information to the public allows informed economic decisions.

While much of this information is provided directly by the government, public access to government information is enhanced through the investment of private sector dollars and entrepreneurship. Publishers, database companies and other information providers improve the value of government information and increase public access by providing a diversity of new information products and services and a diversity of information sources. Such products and services properly complement, but do not replace, basic government information.

Government cannot and should not abrogate its basic information responsibilities. It was for this reason that the information industry opposed the last Administration's efforts to sell off NTIS--the government's primary scientific and technical information clearinghouse.

Recently there has been growing pressure on the government to become a more active information producer and disseminator. I wish to discuss the reasons for this pressure and why I believe it represents a significant threat to the Information Age.

Technology has led to a profusion of new and often more expensive information products and services. Users are increasingly frustrated by their inability to acquire these new products and services, many of which have been produced by the private sector. The reaction is to demand that government intervene more directly in the information marketplace to offer similar or duplicative products and services. This would be a fatal mistake.

Government occupies a dominant and monopolistic position which shields it from the competitive forces of the marketplace. Government has neither the capability nor the incentive to provide citizens with the information products and services they want. The public waited almost 200 years for the U.S. Congress to provide an index and efficient access to its hearings, committee reports and other documents. It was a private sector company that ultimately responded to this need. The government's decision to provide depository libraries with microfilm instead of paper was not based on the needs of users, it was based on a desire to save money. Congress established a "right to know" which requires the Environmental Protection Agency to provide the public with information regarding the location and disposition of toxic materials. The environmental community is dismayed at the poor quality of the Toxic Resources Inventory database (TRI) that is now available. The U.S. Patent bar has expressed similar concerns regarding the automated patent and trademark systems developed by the federal Patent and Trademark Office.

It is frequently assumed that government can produce information products and services comparable to those available from the private sector at the same or lower cost. There is no evidence to support this assumption. It is true that government can *sell* information for less. This is because the price is subsidized by taxpayer dollars, not because the cost of production is less. Moreover, to the extent that government presence in the marketplace discourages the investment of private sector dollars to produce competitive products, users will be limited to a single, government–designed information product or service which may or may not meet their needs. Innovation will be discouraged and users will be unable to select from among a diversity of products and sources. It is also legitimate to ask whether a government which orders $300 hammers and $600 toilet seats will be substantially more efficient in a services economy. It is certainly unlikely.

Another reality we must face is that government does not, and never will, have the resources to meet our nation's information needs. The U.S. Government Printing Office spends less than $25 million annually distributing information to the depository libraries. The politics of information virtually guarantees that this shortage of resources will continue. There is little reason to hope for a change as long as the Administration finds it easier to explain why we are in Saudi Arabia than why our nation's information infrastructure is underfunded.

Unfortunately, even if we could erase our massive deficit, the resources would still not exist. The next $100 to $200 billion in taxpayer dollars is already obligated to bail out the savings and loan industry.

Most importantly, however, citizen access to government information is a corner–stone of democracy, but citizen dependence on government for information is fundamentally at odds with our democratic values. Self–government is predicated upon the free flow of ideas unimpeded by government restrictions on use or content.

Two weeks ago the *Washington Post* reported that a newsletter published by the National Park Service was suddenly terminated. The funding for this newsletter was canceled because a single congressional staffer did not like a humorous comment about congress contained in one of the issues. . That is a tenuous string upon which to rest our freedoms.

Our nation needs a strong and vibrant information infrastructure. Citizens must be guaranteed continuing access to a diversity of information products and services untainted by government control and not subject to the vagaries of budget cuts or the "whimsy" of policy officials. An umbilical cord of taxpayer funded and disseminated information between the federal government and citizen is not the answer. We must work together to identify innovative solutions. We must preserve the freedom of choice by preserving the freedom to choose.

The choice need not be between having and not having information. Citizens are not denied access to government information due to a lack of such products. Citizens do not have access because they have chosen to spend their resources elsewhere or because they lack the resources to acquire those products and services. Perhaps it is time to shift the government's responsibility from producing information to guaranteeing access. This can be accomplished by applying the same principles used elsewhere in our society: provide citizens and libraries with

the resources to acquire the information they actually want and need.

The federal government has not opened colleges to meet our nation's educational needs, or built farms and grocery stores to feed hungry citizens. Instead, we have met these needs with scholarships and food stamps. It may be time to apply the same concepts to information.

Placing decision-making authority with the individual guarantees freedom of choice. It encourages greater investment by both public and private resources in the creation of new products and services. Finally, it guarantees the diversity of ideas and information sources essential to a democracy. We have yet to find a system of government which surpasses the marketplace of ideas.

The Industrial Age deemphasized individuality in favor of uniformity. As Henry Ford said, "you can have any color car you want as long as it is black." The Information Age offers a chance to restore the individuality that was lost with the mass production assembly line. Users have the ability to acquire information products and services specifically tailored to their needs. You, as the consumer, create the product. You need not be confined to what's on the shelf. Individual products developed to meet unique individual needs. This is possible, of course, only to the extent that one can choose from among a diversity of products and services and have the resources to do so.

There is another siren luring government toward the information marketplace: the need for revenues. Nowhere is this trend more evident than at the state and local level.

Twenty three states have predicted a decrease in their 1990 revenues. Thirty seven states expect deficits because expenses will exceed revenues. Unlike the federal government, most states are required by law to balance their budgets.

Many states are trying to deal with these revenue shortfalls by selling information. Some are even opening up marketing departments to actively promote their products and services. As a result of legislation passed last year in Florida, Dade County now sells software around the nation. There is no question that this program offers short-term revenue. However, it may well have a negative long-term impact by discouraging total economic growth within the community. This was brought home in my conversation with a Dade County businessman who reported that he was the losing bidder on a contract in Utah; the winning bidder was the Dade County government to whom this businessman pays taxes.

Such programs also inhibit access to information. In order to protect its interest, the state or local government must restrict the ability of citizens to acquire and use that same information product, even though it has been developed with taxpayer dollars. Copyright, pricing, and privacy laws are among the methods being used by states to restrict access to public information.

Colorado asserts copyright over its statutes and has a law which prohibits anyone from publishing those statutes without specific state authority. Last week my office received an excerpt from a contract that Colorado requires a publisher to sign who wants access to Colorado statutes. Not only does it force the publisher to recognize the state's assertion of copyright, it prohibits the publisher from seeking to challenge the assertion of state copyright or change the law without prior notification to the state government. It appears that if you want access to Colorado statutory information, you have to give up some of your rights to participate in the political process.

Intellectual Property and Technology

Copyright is an essential value of the Information Society now threatened by rapid technological change. How you feel about copyright depends, to a large extent, upon where you sit. Many users of information consider copyright an unnecessary restriction on their ability to use information. My bakery has large signs on the wall which say: "Federal copyright law prohibits us from decorating our cakes with pictures of cartoon characters. So please don't ask." We are all familiar with the signs posted near library photocopy machines cautioning patrons to obey copyright laws. However, without protection for these rights to intellectual property there would be much less information available to users. It is the ability to reap the rewards of their authorship and originality which provides much of the incentive for authors and other information producers. Charles Dickens

dedicated the *Pickwick Papers* to the author of the British copyright law.

While private copyright is protected by the Constitution, the federal government is specifically prohibited from asserting copyright over its information. The founding fathers were aware that other governments had used copyright to control the flow of information to citizens. The purpose of "crown copyright" was simple: restrict the free flow of ideas. One of the reasons that democracy has flourished in the U.S. for over two hundred years is that we have denied our own federal government that same right of control over ownership and encouraged private ownership.

Unfortunately, this same prohibition on government assertion of copyright is not placed on state and local governments. In fact, until last month, when Congress amended the Copyright Act, state and local governments could not even be fined for violating the rights of private copyright holders. Each year the U.S. Copyright Office is receiving more and more applications from state and local governments who wish to register their copyright ownership of information developed at taxpayer expense. There are also growing proposals to permit federal agencies to assert copyright over some or all of their information.

Technology is also changing the nature of private copyright protection and raising new questions as to what is protectable through copyright. For example, the Supreme Court recently agreed to hear an obscure suit between two small companies in Kansas regarding the extent to which compilations--such as telephone books--are protected by copyright. The outcome of this case could result in a *de facto* ability by governments and others to restrict access to facts. Regardless of the decision, this case, in which the IIA filed an amicus brief, is likely to reshape copyright law.

There are many other issues emerging from the Information Age. New technologies and uses of information are creating concerns regarding the extent to which individuals have an enforceable right to personal privacy. There have been several legal decisions which suggest that electronic information may not be receive the same constitutional protections accorded traditional information. It will be difficult to shape an Information Society if the newspaper that arrives in your home on a computer terminal is denied the first amendment protections it would receive if delivered on your doorstep. I hope that you will consider these issues as you plan your agenda.

The International Arena

The United States is not the only place where the Information Society is seeking to blossom. During the past two years we have watched with awe as Eastern Europe undergoes the transformation from dictatorships to democracy. This revolution is an information revolution. The citizens of Eastern Europe are only now experiencing the freedom to acquire and disseminate information without fear of government control or censorship. It was only last year that Romania abolished its law which required that citizens register their typewriters with the government. It is clear that many of these new democracies are looking to the United States as a role model in shaping their information policies.

Eastern Europe is not alone in addressing these issues. Citizens and governments in Europe, Latin America, the Far East and around the world are grappling with the challenges of the Information Age. This weekend information industry representatives from the United States will be attending a meeting in London with government and information industry representatives from around the globe. The agenda for this meeting is the same as yours: shaping the Information Age. What an irony if we have somehow come to take for granted those very freedoms which some persons recently died for. If we are willing to send our young men and women across the ocean to protect democracy, we should be willing to make the investments at home to guarantee those same freedoms.

Making a Difference

This is not a new theme. To some extent it was contained in the recommendations of the 1979 White House Conference. I recently reread the final report from that Conference in an attempt to assess its impact. It is unfortunate to say, especially given the amount of effort that went into the Conference, but few people paid

attention to its results. Perhaps the reason is that few policy officials understand or care about the issues emerging from the Information Age.

The challenge is up to all of us to ensure that these issues are addressed. I have some thoughts that I hope you will consider.

First, establish clear and realistic long-range goals. This Governor's Conference and the National Conference should be viewed as the beginning of a long term process. How will you assess the effectiveness of your efforts when you look back after ten years?

Second, be pragmatic and innovative. Policy officials will not listen to those who refuse to acknowledge realities such as limited resources. In addition to acknowledging those limits, be willing to suggest and explore new and innovative solutions for meeting our nation's information needs.

Third, reach out and build coalitions with all who share a common concern about these issues. I believe that citizens, librarians and industry share a set of common goals. Cooperation must replace past conflict.

Fourth, recognize the rapid change in which we find ourselves and be willing to adapt to that change. Many information companies were started by entrepreneurs who had a single idea. Evolving user needs for information and rapidly changing technology will quickly doom any information company which is not constantly improving its products and diversifying into new areas. The same is true of the library community. It has been said that libraries are the fortresses of freedom--a sentiment with which I agree. However, it would be tragic if a reluctance to change forced society to pass by these fortresses, just as our nation ultimately bypassed and abandoned the forts and outposts of the Old West.

Fifth, recognize that the major decisions of the Information Age will not be made in Washington. The issues I have discussed are emerging in state capitols and local communities. Ultimately, your success will be measured by what happens in Tallahassee, Albany, Columbus and Sacramento--not what happens in Washington. Remember to also pay attention to Brussels and Moscow and Tokyo.

Finally, educate your elected officials as to the challenges and opportunities of the Information Age. Talk their language and demonstrate the benefits to your community. You are fortunate in that you may have an advantage not shared by other states. As a member of the U.S. Senate your governor-elect, Lawton Chiles, was the author of the Paperwork Reduction Act--perhaps the most significant information policy legislation yet enacted by the federal government.

I hope these remarks have stimulated some ideas that may be useful. The United States is the longest surviving democracy in the world because of the importance we place on the flow of information. Freedom of speech and a diversity of ideas, without fear of government control are values that have served us well. As you address the issues of the Information Age, take care to preserve these basic freedoms which are so essential to our society. Thank you.

Kenneth B. Allen is the Senior Vice President of the Information Industry Association.